

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 H-02 /015 R

444FTED BY L/EA:PMNORTON:MAD

APPROVED BY L/EA:EGVERVILLE

EA/TB - MR. TATU

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R 111451Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

UNCLAS STATE 033462

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:CDES, TH

SUBJECT:DEATH OF AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN DAVID M. SOBEL

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REF: RICHARD W. BOEHM LETTER OF 12/18/75 TO SEN. RIBICOFF

1. THE PARENTS OF CHAPLAIN SOBEL VISITED THE DEPARTMENT
2/9 TO MAKE FURTHER INQUIRIES CONCERNING THE CIRCUMSTANCES
OF CHAPLAIN SOBEL'S DEATH. THEY ARE INTERESTED IN PURSUING
THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. THE THAI TRUCK DRIVER, WHO HAS SINCE DISAPPEARED,
WAS DRIVING ON BEHALF OF A LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY.
UNDER THAI LAW, IS SUCH A COMPANY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TORTS
OF ITS AGENTS?

B. MR. AND MRS. SOBEL BELIEVE THE CAR IN WHICH CHAPLAIN
SOBEL WAS TRAVELLING (REG. NO. T.0460) MAY HAVE BEEN
DEFECTIVE IN SOME RESPECT. WOULD THERE BE ANY WAY FOR
THEM TO CONFIRM THIS SUSPICION BY HAVING THE CAR INSPECTED
NOW, OR BY EXAMINING THE RECORDS OF THE GARAGE WHICH
REPAIRED THE CAR AT THE TIME? FURTHER, UNDER THAI LAW,
WOULD A MANUFACTURER BE LIABLE FOR AN INJURY CAUSED BY A
PRODUCT DEFECT SUCH AS THEY BELIEVE THE CAR MAY HAVE HAD?

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C. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THAILAND HAS COMPULSORY INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS AND THAT ALL VEHICLES OWNED BY U.S. EMBASSY PERSONNEL OBTAIN SUCH INSURANCE. IS IT LIKELY THAT THE ISRAELI DIPLOMAT DRIVING THE VEHICLE WOULD ALSO HAVE HAD INSURANCE?

D. WHAT IS THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS UNDER THAI LAW FOR PLACING AN ACTION FOR WRONGFUL DEATH?

2. THE SOBELS INFORM US THAT THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO ENGAGE THE SERVICES OF MR. ALBERT T. CHANDLER OF THE LAW FIRM OF KIRKWOOD, KAPLAN, RUSSIN AND VECCHI, IN BANGKOK. MR. CHANDLER WILL PRESUMABLY BE PURSUING THESE QUESTIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE. ANY ASSISTANCE WHICH YOU CAN PROPERLY GIVE HIM WILL BE APPRECIATED BY THE SOBELS. IN THE MEANTIME, IF YOU ARE READILY ABLE TO PROVIDE ANSWERS OR ADVICE TO THEM THROUGH US, THEY WOULD NO DOUBT FIND THE INFORMATION HELPFUL. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE033462
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760053-0182
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760258/aaaabzew.tel
Line Count: 79
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN L
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 JUN 2004 by oatisao>; APPROVED <29 JUN 2004 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EATH OF AIR FORCE CHAPLAIN DAVID M. SOBEL --
TAGS: CDES, TH, (SOBEL, DAVID M)
To: BANGKOK
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006